

Press Release
May 6, 2005

Source: Hispanic Alliance for Progress Institute

Key Hispanic Group Urges Congress 'Do Not Turn Your Backs on Central America & DR'
*'Economic Integration Through Trade Will Help the Developing Countries in Our Own Hemisphere;
Hispanics Can Help Make a Difference With This Vote'*

WASHINGTON, May 6 – The Hispanic Alliance for Progress Institute, (HAPI) a national Hispanic advocacy and policy organization Chaired by Manuel Lujan, former 20 year Member of Congress and Secretary of the Interior, believes, "it is imperative for Hispanic advocacy to play a role in helping to ensure these Spanish speaking countries and economies receive the same consideration as Morocco" referring to Congressional passage of a free trade agreement with Morocco, a country with much smaller markets and not in this hemisphere that won overwhelming Congressional approval.

"Hispanic Americans are united to these countries by language and similarities in culture, as well as by the increased opportunities in commerce. Passage of DR-CAFTA will better prepare these developing countries to compete in the global economy," added Lujan.

The organization is launching a "Support DR-CAFTA" advocacy campaign that includes letters of support to members of Congress, e-mails to over 30,000 Hispanic advocates, as well as a large-scale, targeted grassroots Hispanic voter contact initiative.

"In past initiatives we have contacted over 500,000 targeted Hispanic voters for advocacy on issues that directly impact the community, ensuring that our voices are heard. We are committed to helping pass this legislation and will mobilize our network to win approval for this agreement because every vote counts," concluded Lujan.

HAPI is also an active member of the Hispanic Alliance for Free Trade, a national coalition of 124 Hispanic organizations and leaders formed in Washington D.C. to advocate for trade issues. HAPI will be honoring Secretary Gutierrez, a champion for DR-CAFTA on May 11, 2005 in an event planned in Washington, D.C.

The Hispanic Alliance for Progress Institute (HAPI) is a public policy and advocacy organization focused on addressing issues crucial to the continued growth and development of the Hispanic community. HAPI is developing innovative public policies while creating a best in class model for civic education and issue advocacy. To find out more about HAPI, please visit <http://www.HAProgressInstitute.org>.